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ABSTRACT

According to the 1970 Census, approximately 33% of the 18,000,000 people living in New York lived in small towns, villages, and open country. Nonetheless, the State's major educational concerns have remained urban oriented. Although rural schools have some strengths (community centered, locally administered programs, desirable environment, and basic American democratic values), pupils coming out of rural schools compare unfavorably with their counterparts in suburban areas. Among the major weaknesses of rural schools are: limited local financial bases; limited opportunities for cultural enrichment; restricted or more traditional approaches to curriculum; less opportunity to observe mainstream business, industry, transportation, etc.; less provision of special services for guidance, health, and recreation, etc.; generally less qualified teachers; and less opportunity or "feel" for developing an educational program geared for change. Improving education in rural New York requires measures which provide: adequate financial support; adequate staffing of schools with well-trained professionals and para-professionals; adequate, up-to-date curricula in both academic and vocational areas; adequate physical facilities enabling professional educators to take full advantage of opportunities for learning; adequate services (guidance, health, and recreation) to provide a climate for mental and physical growth; and adequate opportunity for lay people to have a voice in running rural schools. (JC)

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A Position Paper of the Council on Rural Education

Concerns and Expectations of Rural Residents of the State of New York Regarding Long-Range Planning for Education, Kindergarten Through Grades Twelve

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Conference Board of Farm Organizations

January 1, 1971

This position paper was prepared by a Committee of the Council on Rural Education. Prof. Joe P. Bail, Department of Education, New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University served as chairman along with Dr. Leo Soucy, Assistant Commissioner for School Services, New York State Education Department; Mr. John Bishop, Associate, Bureau of School District Reorganization, New York State Education Department; Mr. Robert Everingham, New York Farm Bureau; and Mr. Ralph Winsor, Agway, Inc.

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Introduction

New York State, with a population of over 18,000,000 as reported by the 1970 Census, has 5,500,000 people or approximately 1/3 of the population living in small towns, villages, and open country. Although most persons agree with the necessity of upgrading and improving educational opportunity in the urban areas, it should be of no less concern to upgrade education in rural areas of the State. This position paper will address itself to the major problems of education in rural New York in the decade ahead, 1970-80.

Education in rural areas has traditionally been more conservative and slower to adapt to change, whether technological or social, or a combination of both. Patterns of school organization, curriculum, and public support have remained largely unchanged through the decade of the fifties and sixties, with some notable exceptions to this in selected school districts. The development and expansion of BOCES throughout the State has perhaps had the most profound affect on educational programs. It is also granted that much improvement has been made in the number and size of school districts since the mid 1930's. However, much yet remains to be done in school district reorganization if school district size is to meet minimum desired levels in some rural areas. The expansion of the community college system through the State University of New York has also favorably affected educational programs on the local level. Yet on the threshold of the 21st Century, education in rural New York faces many problems. An attempt to document and suggest how some of these problems may be met and solved is the primary goal of this report.

Definition of Terms

Several terms need to be defined so that a common point of understanding may be reached. The following terms are of special interest:

Rural Education - Education in other than urban and suburban sections of the State, encompassing pre-kindergarten through grade 12.

Rural Area - Geographical areas with no concentration of population in excess of 2,500 and a density of under 500 persons per square mile. There are 352 such areas in New York State.

BOCES - Board of Cooperative Educational Services

Region - A more or less defined geographic area where educational efforts of individual school districts should be planned and carried out cooperatively.

Fleischmann Commission - A State appointed Commission to study the quality, cost and financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in New York.

Council on Rural Education - A State-wide council of agricultural and educational organizations designed to further rural interests in education and promote understanding between the groups.

Urban Areas - Geographical areas with concentration of populations of 2,500 or more which are incorporated as villages, boroughs, or cities. Density is generally considered to be above 1500 persons per square mile. According to the 1967 County and City Data Book of the U. S. Department of Commerce this includes 326 such areas in New York State. Of this number

*Pages 596-598. Based on 1960 Census Data.

115 are under 5,000 population and by many standards may be considered rural unless immediately adjacent to a larger metropolitan area.

Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) - Every city of 50,000 or more inhabitants plus areas where contiguous cities which meet this minimum with the smaller of the two or more cities having in excess of 15,000 inhabitants is so classified. Certain other stipulations regarding the work force also apply. In New York, the standard SMSA areas are: Albany-Schenectady-Troy; Buffalo; New York City; Rochester; Syracuse; and Utica-Rome, based on 1960 reports.

When urban schools are referred to in this report, it will relate to these Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas and not the definition of urban which appears above.

Suburban Area - For purposes of this discussion, suburban areas are defined as those with populations in excess of 10,000 but under 50,000 population. Density generally ranges from 500 to 1500 per square mile. In New York, in 1960, there were 109 such areas. When suburban schools are spoken of in this report, this will be the area alluded to for reference.

School District - A legally constituted body responsible for operating schools in a given area. There are several legal and operational categories of districts. A working description of the major ones follow:

1. City School Districts - Administered by its own superintendent. Several provisions apply to those with populations of 125,000 or more. These are generally referred to as the "Big Six." Specific types of city school districts are as follow:

a. Enlarged City School District - A district created by adding territory outside the municipal boundary.

b. City Central School District - During a specified five year period, the small cities (under 10,000 population) were permitted to combine with outside districts. Seven such districts were formed.

c. Other City Districts - Contain all or most of the population of a given municipality and do not exceed the boundary of that city.

2. Common School Districts - Districts created by a district superintendent of schools or by special legislation. May operate only through grade eight. Responsible to a district superintendent; may have two or three trustees.

3. Union Free School District - A district created from a common school district by local referendum and approval of the Commissioner of Education; eligible to operate a high school upon State approval.

An Independent Union Free School District is one that has its own Superintendent of Schools and that has met the criteria of 4,500 minimum population and certain minimum educational requirements.

4. Central School District - Organized under Commissioner regulations which specifies a given area (other than a city) by local referendum. Once created, operates under the same provisions as the Union Free District.

An Independent Central School District must meet the same requirements of the Independent Union Free District, including having its own Superintendent of Schools.

5. Central High School - An arrangement whereby a group of contiguous common school districts may jointly operate a secondary school (7-12) with the Common School Trustees serving on the High School Board of Education. Four such districts now exists; additional ones excluded by law.

Table I shows the number and type of districts existing in New York on July 1, 1970.

Table I

Number and Kind of School Districts in New York State, July 1, 1970

			Total
City Superintendencies			
City		55	
Central		7	62
Village Superintendencies			
Central		138	
Union Free		77	215
Supervisory Districts			
Central High School		4	4
Union Free:	Academic	46	
	Elementary	38	
	Contracting	1	85
Central:	Academic	341	
	Elementary	1	342
Common:	Operating	30	
	Contracting	22	52
GRAND TOTAL			760

Source: The State Education Department, Information Center on Education, Albany. Survey of Enrollment, Staff, and Schoolhousing, Fall 1969.

Table II gives the enrollment in the various districts for 1967, 1968, and 1969.

Table II

Districts and Pupils by Kind of District in New York State
Fall 1967, 1968, and 1969

Kind of District	Fall 1967		Fall 1968		Fall 1969	
	No. of Districts	No. of pupils K-12	No. of Districts	No. of pupils K-12	No. of Districts	No. of pupils K-12
New York City	1	1,100,222	1	1,116,711	1	1,113,826
Other city noncentral	54	511,334	54	510,779	54	511,390
Central city	7	19,616	7	19,892	7	20,095
Village superintendency noncentral	75	432,520	75	438,729	74	439,997
Central Village superintendency	116	533,268	124	585,016	128	632,727
Central in supervisory district	374	528,779	361	525,486		521,235
Central high school	4	32,080	4	32,400		32,635
Union free	92	159,453	91	160,443		164,051
Common school	40	8,205	34	7,957		6,853
Total operating districts	763	3,325,477	751	3,397,413	741	3,442,809
Districts not maintaining school	90		72		24	
All districts	853*		823*		765*	

*November

Source: The State Education Department, Information Center on Education, Albany. Survey of Enrollment, Staff, and Schoolhousing, Fall 1969.

Based upon the kind of district, this report is largely concerned with those pupils in Central School Districts (in supervisory districts), Union Free Districts, and Common School Districts. As shown in the above table, this includes approximately 693,000 students in the total state student population of 3,397,000 or approximately one pupil in five (20.5%). To look at it another way, this is a larger combined pupil population than that in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada and North Dakota. Or closer home, it is more than the combined school populations of New Hampshire, Vermont, Delaware, Rhode Island and the District of Columbia.

Another perspective on school district size is the number of pupils enrolled K-12. Table III presents this data for New York for 1967, 1968, and 1969.

Of the 741 districts reported as of July 1, 1969, 213 or 28 percent, have fewer than 1,000 students. Another 191 districts or 26 percent, have enrollments between 1001 and 2000. Taken all together, these 404 districts enroll approximately 388,000 students. It is also interesting to note that a school district with K-12 enrollment of 1500-2000 generally has a graduating class of about 125 students. Those under 1000 students K-12, graduate any where from 60 on down.

Scope of the Problem

As we view it, rural education encompasses those areas of the State where population density is less than 500 persons per square mile. Based on reports of the 1965 census ('70 not yet available), this represents 350 communities with populations not in excess of 2,500 as well as those persons not living in incorporated villages or towns, or adjacent to urban centers of

Table III

Districts and Pupils by Size of District in New York State
Fall, 1967, 1968, and 1969

Fall Enrollment Size Intervals*	Fall 1967		Fall 1968		Fall 1969	
	No. of Districts	No. of Pupils K-12	No. of Districts	No. of Pupils K-12	No. of Districts	No. of Pupils K-12
Largest	1	1,100,222	1	1,116,711	1	1,113,826
Second Largest	1	72,639	1	71,344	1	70,740
25,000-49,999	3	106,478	3	105,931	3	106,902
10,000-24,999	32	422,961	33	441,462	38	498,948
5,000- 9,999	87	589,432	90	621,208	88	602,807
2,000- 4,999	206	643,671	205	649,389	206	661,312
1,000- 1,999	186	269,603	192	281,666	191	284,283
500- 999	112	84,800	103	76,901	102	74,846
200- 499	85	30,794	80	28,683	72	25,491
1- 199	50	4,877	43	4,118	39	3,654
TOTAL	763	3,325,477	751	3,397,413	741	3,442,809

*Data by size intervals show that median district size (50th percentile) has steadily increased from 1,723 in 1967 to 1,825 in 1969. For the same period the 25th and 75th percentiles have increased from 749 to 864 and 4,028 to 4,423 respectively.

Source: The State Education Department, Information Center on Education, Albany. Survey of Enrollment, Staff, and Schoolhousing, Fall 1969.

population. These figures total over five million persons out of a total population of eighteen million (See Table IV). Further projections of the State Office of Planning Coordination indicate that the greatest population growth in New York up to 1975 will take place in communities of 2500 population or under. Preliminary reports of the 1970 Census bear this out with a number of metropolitian areas or cities actually decreasing in population. It is generally agreed by demographic experts that 1/3 of the total population will continue to live in what can be considered rural areas even through 1980.

Table IV

Population of Communities in New York State

Urban Population	Population					
	No. of Communities	1965	No. of Communities	1970	No. of Communities	1975
Over 500,000	2	9,075,045	2	9,246,372	2	9,325,468
100,000-500,000	4	846,058	4	832,949	4	820,102
50,000-100,000	9	679,627	9	678,192	9	678,525
10,000-50,000	66	1,410,922	67	1,428,604	70	1,468,092
2,500-10,000	151	787,289	148	801,504	145	778,286
Total Urban Population	232	12,798,941	230	12,987,621	231	13,070,473
Total Rural Population		4,995,198		5,763,054		6,595,047
Total State Population		17,794,139		18,750,675		19,665,520

Source: New York State Office of Planning (Based on 1965 Census and Projections for 1970 and 1975)

Rural schools can be generally described as having the following characteristics which contribute toward educational deficiencies. These are: inadequate size (enrollment), curricular limitations, professional staffs with less training and experience than their suburban counterparts, and inadequate financial resources as measured by any standard. Perhaps the first three impinge upon the last factor named since the amount of financial resources available and used ultimately determine the quality of the educational program.

Two other factors related to financial resources, which adversely affect education in the rural areas of the State, are chronic unemployment or under employment and low economic power. Map 1 gives a picture of unemployment in New York State. A quick glance will show that almost without exception these counties are considered to be rural. A classification of economically depressed areas, based on eligibility for Federal Aid under various statutes, again show the rural areas of the State to be predominant (Map 2).

For what its worth, rural areas are not confined to New York State. A report of the Rural Education Association of the N.E.A. points out that Rural America still encompasses a great part of our country. In fact, 37 states have a population density of less than 100 per square mile (Vol. 22, #1, March 1970, Rural Education News). ~~Table V gives a picture of density, based upon several pupil characteristics.~~

In New York State, approximately 12% of those families living in rural areas can be classified as commercial farmers. The remainder, 88%, are those families choosing to live in rural areas and commute to centers of population for their employment. Some of this latter group may engage in agriculture

Table V

Density - Pupil Characteristics
1967-68

	New York State Total	New York City	Balance of State Total	Balance of State 81 Most Dense **	Balance of State All Others
Pupils Enrolled	3,325,222	1,029,200 30.9%	2,296,022	746,557 32.5%	1,549,445 67.4%
*A.D.C. Children	396,000	273,540 69.0%	122,460	58,505 47.7%	63,995 52.2%
Mental and Physically Handicapped (65-66)	48,245	24,489 50.7%	23,756	11,995 50.5%	11,758 49.4%
Est. Underachievers	868,759	455,936 52.4%	412,823	166,359 40.2%	246,464 59.7%
Non-White	687,592	542,264 78.8%	145,328	106,747 73.4%	38,581 26.5%

*Aid to Dependent Children

**Location of Districts

Nassau-30 Suffolk-14 West.-13 Erie-7 Monroe-3 Niagara-2	One Each-Albany, Broome, Clinton, Columbia, Dutchess, Fulton, Montgomery, Oneida, Onondaga, Rensselaer, St. Lawrence, Schenectady	Includes-Cities; Except Albany, and 21 of "small" cities.

on a part-time basis, but make no substantial contribution to the production of food or fiber to feed and clothe the nation's population.

This report then deals with education in those areas of the state where population density and resources available are such that special problems

exist regarding the ability to finance and offer a quality educational program to meet the needs of the decade of the '70's. Attention, hopefully, will be directed to viable alternatives to upgrade the educational program of these communities.

Major Concerns Regarding Quality Education in Rural Areas

A Charter of Education For Rural Children*, adopted by the First White House Conference on Rural Education in 1944, spells out the educational rights of rural children. Conferences in 1954 and 1962 reiterated these rights. They are produced in part here and provide an overall guideline for the kind of quality educational program hoped for in rural ~~New York~~ areas of our country.

1. Every rural child has the right to satisfactory, modern elementary education. This education should be such as to guarantee the child an opportunity to develop and maintain a healthy body and a balanced personality, to acquire the skills needed as tools of learning, to get a good start in understanding and appreciating the natural and social world, to participate happily and helpfully in home and community life, to work and play with others, and to enjoy and use music, art, literature, and handicrafts.
2. Every rural child has the right to a satisfactory modern secondary education. This education should assure the youth continued progress in his general, physical, social, civic, and cultural development begun in the elementary school, and provide initial training for occupations and an open door to college and the professions.

*White House Conference on Education, 1944.

3. Every rural child has the right to an educational program that bridges the gap between home and school, between school and adult life. This program requires, on the one hand, cooperation with parents for the home education of children too young for school and for the joint educational guidance by home and school of all other children; and, on the other hand, the cooperative development of cultural and vocational adult education suited to the needs and desires of the people of the community.
4. Every rural child has the right through his school to health services, educational and vocational guidance, library facilities, recreational activities, and, where needed, school lunches and pupil transportation facilities at public expense. Such special services because they require the employment of specially qualified personnel, can be supplied most easily through enlarged units of school administration and the cooperation of several small schools.
5. Every rural child has the right to teachers, supervisors, and administrators who know rural life and who are educated to deal effectively with the problems peculiar to rural schools. -Persons so educated should hold State certificates that set forth their special qualifications, should be paid adequate salaries, and should be protected by law and fair practices in security of their positions as a reward for good and faithful services. The accomplishment of these objectives is the responsibility of local leadership, State departments of education, the teacher-education institutions, and national leaders in rural education.

6. Every rural child has the right to educational service and guidance during the entire year and full-time attendance in a school that is open for not less than 9 months in each year for at least 12 years. -The educational development of children during vacation time is also a responsibility of the community school. In many communities the period of schooling has already become 14 years and should become such in all communities as rapidly as possible.
7. Every rural child has the right to attend school in a satisfactory modern building. -The building should be attractive, clean, sanitary, safe, conducive to good health, equipped with materials and apparatus essential to the best teaching, planned as a community center, and surrounded by ample space for playgrounds, gardens, landscaping, and beautification.
8. Every rural child has the right through the school to participate in community life and culture. -For effective service the school plans must be planned and recognized as a center of community activity; the closest possible interrelationships should be maintained between the school and other community agencies; and children and youth should be recognized as active participants in community affairs.
9. Every rural child has the right to a local school system sufficiently strong to provide all the services required for a modern education. -Obtaining such a school system depends upon organizing amply large units of school administration. Such units do not necessarily result in large schools. Large schools can usually provide broad educational opportunities more economically, but with special efforts small schools can serve rural children and communities.

10. Every rural child has the right to have the tax resources of his community, State, and Nation used to guarantee him an American standard of educational opportunity. -This right must include equality of opportunity for minority and low economy groups. Since many rural youths become urban producers and consumers, it is necessary for the development of the democratic way of life that the wealth and productivity of the entire Nation should aid in the support of the right of every child to a good education.

We admit that it is relatively easy to spell out an educational bill of rights for students in rural areas. The difficult job is to implement a program which will carry these goals to fruition. Much has been accomplished but much yet remains to be done. Based upon evaluations, both subjective and objective, we feel the following are major ~~concerns~~ expectations of education in rural areas through 1980.

1. An adequate pre-school opportunity for those pupils who because of one factor or another are disadvantaged, so that a positive approach for entry into the kindergarten and elementary program will exist.

2. A meaningful elementary education with an up-to-date curriculum, in a modern facility which includes learning centers designed to supplement the conventional classroom situation.

3. A relevant secondary education program with a broad curriculum offering including the opportunity to explore the world of work.

4. Adequate compensatory education where needed so students can avail themselves of regular school programs.

5. Adequate health and social services to enable pupils to profit from the educational program.

6. Adequate educational and vocational guidance services.

7. Opportunity to participate in community life through cooperation of all agencies.

8. Opportunity to further education in a formal or informal setting upon leaving the secondary education program, whether graduates or drop-outs.

Status of Rural Education in New York

What is the current status of education in upstate rural New York? How do rural schools compare with their sister institutions in urban areas? Are students coming out of rural areas able to compete academically and vocationally with their counterparts in the cities? What are the strengths and weaknesses as viewed by professional educators, parents and the lay public? These are but a few of the questions asked when this problem is posed. Fortunately, there are answers to some of these points with objective data. However, others by their very nature, are subjective and therefore difficult to arrive at reasonable answers. A few of the more outstanding attributes of rural schools will be presented.

Strengths of Education in Rural Schools

Several strengths generally found in rural schools of today are worth noting. Although all may not agree with the listing, there is general acceptance of the ideas by lay and professional people in rural areas regarding these points.

1. Community Centered - The school is the center of activity and one of the few institutions over which the public feels it retains control. Schools are meeting places for community groups - PTA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Civic

groups, Adult Education, and many more. The opportunity to be in the physical setting where students of the community gather is in itself, of no little consequence in keeping the community informed about its schools. Oftentimes community fairs or shows encompass the total school from kindergarten through grade 12. The school is the "center" of education, social, and other activities. With the demise of many rural churches and agricultural societies, the school has become more of a focal point for all community activities. It provides cohesion for the many elements that may be found in a community. The school is truly a community institution even though residents may commute to nearby cities for employment or for shopping.

2. Locally Administered and Run - Schools provide one of the few remaining institutions in which people feel they have a real voice in managing. The members of the Board of Education as well as the professional staff are generally known personally by many citizens of the communities. A direct line, without intermediaries, exists between the taxpayer and school officials. Although not always appreciated by the "board member or professional schoolman", it nevertheless provides a tangible relationship with a local agency of government.

3. Desirable Environment - The absence of congestion, both vehicular and pedestrian, along with hopefully cleaner air, water, and other natural resources, make the living and learning environment much more desirable in rural areas. Although rural areas are not without their blights, they nearly always provide the opportunity to be close to nature. If wisely used, the great out-of-doors can contribute intellectually and aesthetically to many aspects of the school program as they relate to man and his environment.

4. Basic American and Democratic Values - Schools in rural areas nearly always reflect the attitudes and ideals that have been perpetuated and nurtured in our society. These include citizenship, economic independence, and individual and group responsibility. An awareness of and willingness to help the less fortunate or those beset by personal or family misfortune still persists in rural areas.

The Presidential Task Force on Rural Development* has stressed the concern for "quality of life" to include the rural as well as urban ghetto areas. The ~~recently appointed Rural Affairs Council is delegated the authority and responsibility~~ 1972 Rural Development Act, mentioned earlier, is designed to help Rural America become an asset rather than a liability in meeting the needs of our expanding population. The characteristics outlined above are positive contributions to improving the lives of many Americans.

Weaknesses of Schools in Rural Areas

Again not all will agree with the listing here. However, it is an attempt to outline what we consider some of the major shortcomings of schools in rural areas of the State.

1. Limited local financial base on which to provide support.

2. Limited opportunity to enrich local schools by not having access to or contact with museums, libraries, art galleries, performing arts centers, and other aesthetic institutions normally located in urban areas.

3. Restricted or more traditional approaches to curriculum.

4. Less opportunity to observe the world around them as reflected in business, industry, transportation and other factors.

*Appointed by President Nixon. Report presented in March 1970.

5. Less provision for special services of guidance, health, recreation, etc.

6. Generally, less highly qualified teachers and professional staffs as reflected in experience and degrees held.

7. Less opportunity or "feel" for developing an educational program geared for change.

While these limitations are severe, we feel that with adequate resources and dedicated school people, most can be rectified. These points will be discussed later in terms of specific recommendations for correcting these ills.

Some specific comparisons of rural and urban schools follow:*

Item	Rural Schools**	Suburban and Urban Schools (excluding New York City)
Completing 9th Grade -	81%	84%
Completing High School -	67%	75%
Continuing Education Beyond High School -	56%	61%
Dollars Spent Per Pupil in -	$1,147.00	$1,111.00
Student-teacher ratio (elementary) -	1-20	1-22
Student-teacher ratio (secondary) -	1-18	1-23
Teacher Turnover (annually) -	21%***	16%***
Percent of Underachievers**** -	59%	40%

*BEDS, New York State Education Department, Information Center on Education, Albany. (Figures approximate due to interpolation of data.)

**Rural schools are defined as those existing in areas with population bases under 2,500.

***Based on a five year average.

****Based on 1967-68 figures (from studies of Public School Support).

Although gross averages or percentages for a state the size of New York can be misleading, the overall story told by the above comparisons bear out the findings that schools in rural areas fare less well by most measures than those in urban or suburban areas (excluding New York City). Dropout rates are higher, fewer students continue formal education, and the percent of students below minimum competence level are higher than in suburban areas. Although student-teacher ratio and dollars spent per pupil are not significantly different, the figures reflect smaller school enrollments with concommitant higher costs per pupil. The turnover of teachers is also generally less favorable (higher) in rural areas.

A study of high school graduates entering post-high school institutions is summarized in Table VI.

Table VI

A Comparison of High School Graduates Not Entering Post-high School Institutions, 1966, By Counties, Classified as Rural and Urban-Suburban

County	Percent Not Entering PHS	Classification*
New York State	42	--
Hamilton	53	R
Tioga	52	R
Schuyler	51	R
Lewis	51	R
Seneca	51	R
Orleans	50	R
Oswego	50	R
Genesee	50	R
Chemung	49	U
Putnam	49	U
Livingston	48	R
Madison	48	R
Franklin	48	R
Oneida	48	R
Orange	48	U
Steuben	47	R

*R = Rural; U = Urban

Source: A Study of the Plans of New York State High School Graduates, The University of the State of New York, State Education Dept., Albany, 1968.

A quick glance shows that most upstate rural counties do not compare favorably with the State average in this measure.

In summary, the pupils coming out of rural schools compare unfavorably with their counterparts in suburban areas. It is safe to assume then that graduates of these schools compete less favorably in the marketplace, be it the world of work or world of academia.

Expectations of Rural Residents Regarding the Educational Program

It has been frequently stated that the greatest obstacle to quality education is our willingness to settle for less than the best. This has been true in all areas of the State. In today's society, it seems imperative that we must do the best we can, because even that may not be enough. Problems in a society of well over 200 million people inter-relate and criss-cross to such an extent that few if any stand alone. However at the root of most, seems to be inadequate educational opportunity, whether it be poverty, deprivation of some other sort, or specific concerns for unemployment, drugs, or racism.

Early work by Butterworth and Dawson[1] delineated the attributes of a modern rural school. Although time changes, some basic values and goals remained unchanged. In today's rural school, these would include the following:

1. Equal educational opportunity for all.
2. Basic financial support, combining local, state, and federal monies to assure No. 1 above.

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[1]Butterworth, Julian and Howard A. Dawson. The Modern Rural School. McGraw-Hill, 1952. pp. 132-134.

3. Opportunity to continue formal education to the limit of one's ability.
4. Opportunity to share in the determination of goals for the local school.
5. Opportunity for pupils to compete with others of like ability for jobs, advanced schooling, etc.
6. A quality educational program including the following:
   (a) Early childhood education
   (b) Adequate elementary education
   (c) Adequate middle school education including the opportunity to explore the world of work
   (d) Adequate secondary education to prepare for:
      1. Advanced academic work
      2. Entry level occupational skills
   (e) Adequate compensatory education
   (f) An understanding of the American way of life with emphasis on both strengths and weaknesses
7. Retention of involvement of local people by election of Boards of Education and other inputs to strengthen the system.

Proposals for Strengthening Education in Rural Areas

Education is an active, lifelong process. As such, all institutions share in its successes and failures - be they schools, homes, churches or synogagues and communities. However, the public school is charged with specific responsibilities in our society.

The basic objectives of formal education in the schools today are similar to those given in the past. These include the transmission of the cultural heritage, the teaching of the fundamental knowledges, skills, attitudes and ideals necessary to be a participating citizen in today's society, and the development of the ability to think critically and determine solutions to problems now existing or that may arise in the future. To do this, requires both diversity and uniformity. Diversity in the sense that local schools may determine how they meet an objective, but uniformity in the results or goals to be attained. To accomplish this in rural schools we feel the following is necessary.

1. Adequate financial support combining local, state and federal revenue sharing. Specific attention to financing in rural areas must include an awareness of the following factors.

   (a) Sparsity - The lowest 10% of school districts in the State show a pupil density per square mile from 1 to 6*. All of these are rural districts. The top 10% on the other hand show a density ranging from 991 to 3367* (the latter New York City). The 50th percentile figure for 62 cities is 661 per square mile for all counties and New York City is 23 per square mile. Clearly, these figures indicate that in low and high density pupil population areas where special pupil characteristics exist, such as disadvantaged poor, culturally deprived, or non-English speaking, require special treatment in the allotment of State aid if <u>equal educational opportunity</u> is to be a reality.

*The University of the State of New York, State Education Department, Bureau of Educational Finance Research. <u>Two Alternative Measures of Density of the Major School Districts in New York State.</u> 1966. pp. 10-11, 8-9.

(b) Wealth per square mile (full value). - Again the low 10% of schools are in rural areas with a range in value from $17,000 to $87,000 per square mile. Contrasted with the top 10% of districts (from $28,567,000 to $128,701,000) the figures are quite revealing. The 50th percentile figure for 62 cities is $12,091,000 per square mile and for all counties and New York City is $361,000 per square mile. Rural schools fall well below the mid point on both measures.

(c) Valuation per pupil - The true valuation of property per pupil is generally considered to be one of the more significant measures of the ability to finance public education. Rural counties, where the bulk of school districts with K-12 enrollment of 2,000 pupils or less are located, invariably have lower total valuation per pupil. As shown in Table VII, 26 such counties have valuation of less than $18,000 per pupil. Another 8 counties have valuations of between $18,001 and $20,000. All are considered to be rural and only one Oneida, has a SMSA located within its boundaries (Utica-Rome). The State average valuation per pupil is

(d) Tax Rate - Although tax rates in urban schools closely parallel those in non-urban schools, ($17.98 as against $18.76 per $1,000 full value in 1970) it is generally agreed that poor districts are taxing property at about the maximum level it will accept. Even a large increase in taxes in these districts would fail* to bring their programs above a level at which the State will share under current practices.

*The University of the State of New York, State Education Department. Analysis of School Finances, New York State School Districts 1968-69. May 1970. p. 43.

Table VII

Full Valuation, Real Property, Per Pupil in Resident WADA*,
By Counties, 1967-1968

	COUNTIES
Under $12,000	Lewis, Tioga
$12,001 - $14,000	Allegany, Chenango, Washington
$14,001 - $16,000	Cattaragus, Clinton, Cortland, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, Orleans, Saratoga, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming
$16,001 - $18,000	Cayuga, Fulton, Genesee, Montgomery, Oswego, Otsego, St. Lawrence, Schoharie
$18,001 - $20,000	Chemung, Columbia, Delaware, Herkimer, Livingston, Oneida, Ontario, Rensselaer

*Weighted Average Daily Attendance (Formula - each student grades 7-12 = 1.25; 1-6 = 1.00; K-5 = .5 (half day)

Source: The University of the State of New York, State Education Department, Information Center on Education. Annual Education Summary, 1967-68. p. 188-198.

Another major factor affecting tax rates in rural areas regards assessment rates for land used for agricultural purposes. According to the Gouvernor's Report on Preserving Agricultural Land in New York State, assessment inequities do exist on land and buildings used for agricultural production purposes. If agriculture is to remain as a viable part of the State's economy, attention must be given to not only preserving the best agricultural land, but also taxing it in an equitable manner. This may necessitate new legislation to provide certain exemptions as well as provisions for agricultural purposes and not for market value assuming developments of subdivisions or other uses.

(e) Transportation - Percentage costs of the total educational budget going to transportation is noticeably higher in rural schools. Monies used therefore to transport pupils means limitations elsewhere in staff, curricula, and special services. If this factor is not equated for (100%), clearly the basic educational program must suffer.

(f) Average Median Personal Income - County averages show clearly that personal income per capita is much lower in rural areas. Actual disposable income left after taxes, is greatly reduced whether for schools or other necessary family and living expenses. Table VIII presents a list of the low fifteen counties on income per capita (See also Map 6).

(g) Percent Students From Poverty Homes - Rural New York has its share of students from homes with median incomes under $3,000 annually. Special provision must be made in State Aid policies to account for these pupils as is currently done in urban areas. The Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) formula must be adapted to rural New York since more than 30% of these children are located outside New York City. Of these, students outside New York City, about one-half are found in rural school districts of the State.

(h) Percent of Under-Achievers - Any school district that shows high percentages of pupils in these categories (as defined by standardized tests) must receive special aid if education is to be truly equal in opportunity. Rural schools, along with those in urban ghetto areas, account for the largest numbers of such pupils.

Table VIII

Rank of Counties by Personal Income Per Capita, Lowest Fifteen and Highest Five, Classified as Rural or Urban/Suburban

County	Personal Income per Capita	Rank	Classification
Lowest Fifteen			
Clinton	$1,267	58	R
Franklin	1,393	57	R
Lewis	1,456	56	R
St. Lawrence	1,509	55	R
Schoharie	1,522	54	R
Allegany	1,635	53	R
Delaware	1,656	52	R
Jefferson	1,680	51	R
Washington	1,702	50	R
Yales	1,710	49	R
Essex	1,725	48	R
Wyoming	1,742	47	R
Cattaragus	1,757	46	R
Hamilton	1,764	45	R
Herkimer	1,790	44	R
Highest Five			
Westchester	3,925	1	U/S
Nassau	3,489	2	U/S
Monroe	2,929	3	U/S
Rockland	2,883	4	U/S
New York City	2,700	5	U/S

(R = Rural; U/S = Urban/Suburban)

Source: Measurement of the Ability of Local Governments to Finance Local Public Services. State Education Department, Bureau of Educational Finance, Albany, 1967. p. 99-100.

2. School districts must be of sufficient size (pupil population) to be economically efficient and educationally sound. However, many factors must be considered in establishing guidelines for school district size. They must be guidelines and not absolutes if the educational program is to be most meaningful to the pupils and to the people it is serving. Not withstanding

these cautions, there are still too many small, relatively inefficient districts in the State, as measured by most standards.

3. Shared services must increase both in special, vocational, academic, and school management (purchasing, data processing, etc.). An excellent beginning is underway in vocational education, special education, and selected services developed under BOCES. Regional compacts designed to serve a specific function (for example - Educational TV) must increase in the years ahead. Several studies related to this subject must be carefully reviewed. Cooperation with non-public schools must also be explored in terms of providing all youth with the best educational opportunity.
4. Provisions for local school districts to meet minimum educational goals by special grants to provide services, facilities, or equipment to carry out needed changes, including compensatory type programs, must be enacted. These must be built into the system if long-term gains are to be expected.
5. Provisions for a program designed to provide minimum skills in reading for students in all grade levels in rural schools must become a reality.
6. The opportunity to make use of modern technology and findings of research on learning skills in early childhood, elementary, and secondary programs must be encouraged.
7. Lastly, the opportunity for rural people to be meaningfully involved in planning and carrying out the goals of their local schools must continue and be strengthened.

Summary

The story told here can be boiled down to the following specific recommendations as they relate to improving education in rural areas of New York State.

1. Adequate financial support.
2. Adequate staffing of schools with well-trained professionals and para-professionals.
3. Adequate, up-to-date curricula in both academic and vocational areas.
4. Adequate physical facilities enabling professional educators to take full advantage of opportunities for learning.
5. Adequate services - guidance, health, recreation - to provide a climate for health growth of pupils both mentally and physically.
6. Adequate opportunity for lay people to have a voice in running these schools.

Each of these will be treated in more detail.

1. Financing - Beginning in 1970, it is safe to predict that basic levels of State support must be increased if we are to provide the quality program envisioned in this report. Clearly, in most rural areas, existing ways of raising monies to support schools (property tax) do <u>not</u> provide this. A broader base, regional or state, must come into existence. Additionally, alternate or supplemental ways of financing must be found. Small school districts (intentionally left undefined) must look to broader units for this support. Any artificial or real supports which maintain unsound small districts must be eliminated. Efforts must be made to get <u>funds</u> (regardless of source) to

those points in the educational system where improvements need to be made. Geographic location of students (requiring special transportation costs) must not be allowed to detract from equal educational opportunity.

2. Staffing - Rural schools must be made attractive to teachers, administrators, and other professionals. Salary schedules must be competive with other professions of like training. Incentives may be necessary to counteract advantages (presumed and real) available in urban and suburban areas. Local school districts must choose and reward professionals based upon qualifications and performance and not political expedencies. Tenure must be based on objective evaluation of teaching effectiveness.
3. Curriculum - The curriculum must be broad enough and flexible enough to meet the needs of all pupils. Cooperative efforts, through BOCES and with other public or private educational agencies must be encouraged if this is to come about in rural areas.
4. Buildings - State standards and guidelines (encompassing [redacted] modern) concepts) must be flexible and adaptable to meet new needs. Opportunity to take advantage of innovative ideas in education must be available in all new facilities.
5. Services - Services for students in rural areas must be expanded if they are to profit fully from the educational enterprise. These include the standard services of health, nutrition, and counseling, and special attention to rural students who are disadvantaged socially or economically because of home or community conditions.
6. Participation - Involvement of parents and other lay people in the educational program must be strengthened. Schools must be kept near the people even

though this at times slows educational change. Boards of Education should continue to be elected on a non-partisan basis. Additional involvement of lay people in curriculum planning and other advisory roles is a must.

Finally, the school people must be held accountable for their product. Evaluation by lay and professional groups must provide the impetus for further desirable changes.

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SUPPORTING DATA

List of Maps (Reproduced from: New York State Plan for Occupational Education, State Education Department, Albany. 1968)

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